



SAINT JOHN CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, April 27, 2011

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Brunswick Square Storefront

PRESENT: Anne McShane
Peter McGuire
Derrick Mitchell
Patty Higgins
Mokhtaria Benhatchi
Heather Quinn
Gerry Lowe
Andrew Miller
Barry Harbinson
David Drinnan
Sara Mudge

STAFF: Jacqueline Hamilton, Deputy Commissioner
Sarah Herring, Planner
Jody Kliffer, Planner
Stacey Forfar, Planner

REGRETS: Ann Crozier
Shawn Peterson

1.0 Welcome and Review of Regrets

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and advised that Ann Crozier sent her regrets as she was unable to attend the meeting. Jacqueline Hamilton introduced the new City Planner Stacey Forfar.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

*It was **MOVED** by Gerry Lowe, **SECONDED** by Barry Harbinson to approve the agenda as circulated.*

CARRIED.

3.0 Adoption of Minutes

It was **MOVED** by Andrew Miller, **SECONDED** by Derrick Mitchell to adopt the April 13th, 2011 minutes as circulated.

CARRIED.

4.0 April 14th Plan SJ Workshop Debrief

Jacqueline noted that the turnout for the April 14th Workshop at Barnhill Memorial was smaller than had been previously anticipated, but good feedback and input was received from all of the working groups. There was a general concurrence on the policy directions from the community members at the Workshop, although the team recognizes that individual parties and stakeholders with vested interests may have concerns about some policies that impact them directly.

The CAC pointed out that there are rumours and concerns about potential large-scale projects in the City. Jacqueline reminded CAC that the Municipal Plan can encompass only what we know as fact today and cannot speculate on the unknown. If projects arise that are not in line with the Municipal Plan policies then an application and amendment with significant public engagement and discussion could be triggered. This is the main reason that the question was asked what criteria should be used to evaluate new proposals.

CAC discussed the letter they received from JDI which included requests for changes to the City Structure map as presented at the April 14th workshop. When asked why JDI is coming forward with these requests “at the last minute”, Jacqueline noted that more requests may come forward because now the maps and policies are becoming more detailed and property-specific so people and companies can see the impact it may have on them. The CAC will have to decide how they want to manage these kinds of requests, and Jacqueline suggested that they could meet with the parties to understand how they are impacted and then compare that to broader community comments when putting forth a recommendation to Council. A protocol will need to be established over time to address concerns consistently.

Jacqueline explained that the Municipal Plan is a living document and anyone has the right to apply for an amendment. Heather Quinn pointed out that establishing the criteria that will be used to evaluate new proposal is essential as in another 5 years there will be a new Council and it is important that the language and guidelines be in place and not open to interpretation. Jacqueline agreed and noted that while staff is focusing on writing policy and producing a draft Plan right now, more meetings can be held with interested parties during the next public review period (after the June 15th Open House).

Heather pointed out that the CAC should have a standard response letter stating that Municipal Plan amendments can be applied for in the future.

5.0 Review of Work in Progress

a) City Structure

The City Structure as reviewed at the last meeting sets out the hierarchy of areas in the City and the rationale behind how the City is ordered. The City Structure also sets the context for the future Land Use Map and Policies in the Municipal Plan.

b) Land Use-Commercial & Industrial

Jody pointed out that the Land Use section in the Municipal Plan will include the Commercial and Industrial and Housing sections presented tonight (they were separated during the drafting of the policies as different planners were working on different sections).

The City Structure focuses on making the Uptown the economic heart of the City and focuses education and health care related uses in the area of the University and Hospital plateau. Other areas of the City would include industrial uses (existing in current locations and new in Industrial Parks), business parks, local centres and regional retail. Small employment uses could be permitted in neighbourhoods to help build complete communities.

Jody explained on Nayan's behalf that the Municipal Plan would set out guidelines for the types of use and size of use (floor area) permitted in each area. These would be expressed as "intensity levels" in both the housing and commercial/industrial sections of the Plan.

c) Land Use-Housing

Jody highlighted that one main concern was how to integrate mixed income levels naturally to provide affordability through unit size and number of units. He also noted that policies on sustainability and energy efficiency standards for housing would be included.

The CAC expressed interest in making the language around affordable housing stronger, changing terms like "should" into "will" and "encourage" into "must". Jacqueline agreed that the team would look at strengthening this section, but cautioned that our ability to regulate and require affordable housing is limited by Provincial legislation and jurisdiction.

The CAC and staff also discussed potential restrictions on rural development, including larger minimum lot sizes, larger street frontages, prohibiting new streets and restricting the number of times a property could be subdivided.

d) Arts, Culture and Heritage

Sarah discussed that many of the directions regarding Arts and Culture stem from the City's existing Arts and Culture Policy. Heritage policy directions are also consistent with current heritage conservation, but that more flexibility in standards and a review of the priorities of the heritage conservation program have been included as the public has been very divided on the issue of heritage conservation.

Several members of the CAC emphasized that while heritage conservation is important, it's even more important to make sure that people can afford to maintain their buildings in a good state of repair and build new development in the Uptown and other neighbourhoods to boost the City's tax base.

Dave Drinnan pointed out that any municipal funding to arts and cultural organizations and events should require that the events be truly accessible and affordable for everyone in the community, and should focus on providing funding for artists and event in the City (not in the Region).

e) Urban Design

Staff pointed out that because Provincial legislation restricts how much a City can regulate urban design, this section will be set out as performance standards rather than prescriptive guidelines. More detailed urban design criteria and objectives can be included in Neighbourhood Plans.

f) Implementation

Jacqueline noted that this section of the Plan doesn't even exist in the current Municipal Plan! The policies on implementation will describe the governance and regulatory framework of the Plan – that it will inform decision-making for all areas of the City, mandate updated By-laws to be in alignment with the Plan, and set out criteria for Neighbourhood Plans and Functional Plans and studies. It will also provide guidance on how often the Plan should be updated and under what circumstances it should be amended (for instance, “game-changing” large-scale development proposals).

The CAC discussed how quickly Neighbourhood Plans could be completed, since all of the priority neighbourhoods require attention and investment and which areas would be the first focus. Jacqueline noted that Neighbourhood Plans are intended to be more focused, action-oriented and quick than the Municipal Plan. They will include intensive engagement to set out a vision for the neighbourhood and identify key actions and projects. Because they will be a quicker, different type of planning they could potentially be completed for all of the neighbourhoods within the first 5-10 years after the Municipal Plan is adopted. Jacqueline also pointed out that the team is looking at setting

objective criteria for neighbourhood planning priority so that it doesn't become a political issue.

The implementation policies will also address how committed (or "grandfathered" development will be dealt with.

6.0 Other Business

The CAC will be joining the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) for a tour of the Port on May 3rd, 2011. A transit bus will pick the group up on Chipman Hill at 5:00pm, and then the meeting will be held at the PlanSJ Storefront after the tour.

Jacqueline and Peter mentioned that PlanSJ has been receiving attention from other cities in Atlantic Canada and across Canada because of the extensive and innovative public engagement that's being done. Jacqueline has been invited to present at the CIP (Canadian Institute of Planners) national conference this year and the Growth Strategy has been submitted for a planning award.

7.0 Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the CAC is scheduled for May 18th, 2011 at 6:00pm in the Plan SJ Storefront.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Jacqueline Hamilton,
Deputy Commissioner of Planning & Development